

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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### Opening Statement Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

**H.R. 2196**

**A Bill to Allow Whistleblowers to Disclose Information to Certain Recipients**

**May 2, 2017**

I want to thank Representative Russell for introducing this bill. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor.

This bill would provide important protections to whistleblowers who handle classified information and want to report waste, fraud, or abuse. Under this bill, employees covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act could disclose to any supervisors in their direct chain of command classified information the employees reasonably believes shows wrongdoing.

Under the Whistleblower Protection Act, if a whistleblower discloses classified information, the whistleblower is protected only if they make their disclosures to the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, the head of the whistleblower's agency, or an employee designated by the head of the agency.

It is critical that we encourage employees who handle classified information to blow the whistle on waste, fraud, and abuse. Allowing employees to go to other supervisors with evidence of wrongdoing may be less intimidating than going to the agency head or an IG.

This bill is modeled on language in a Presidential Policy Directive issued in 2012. That directive, PPD-19, provided whistleblower protections to intelligence community employees, who are not covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act.

The House-passed version of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act included a provision that is similar to the bill we are considering today.

This is an important bill, and I look forward to working with Mr. Russell and other Members of the Committee to get it to the President's desk.

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